

Henry Taylor House 1838

Historical Houses

In March 1838, James Garrett sold 4 acres of land to Henry Taylor, a yeoman and shipwright from Medford. The property was without dwellings and included land now at 50 Washington St., as well as the 2 lots on the west as far as the school house lot, presently known as the Girl Scout House. He probably built the house during the summer of 1838 and lived there for 10 years, working in the ship yards. Whether he lived there with his first wife, who died during this time, or whether he lived alone, his wife having died in Medford, has not been discovered.

On December 3, 1848, Henry Taylor, widower and 42 years old, married Mary Smith, age 33, in Medford and in September 1849 a son, George Henry, was born to them, also in Medford.

It was at this time, September 1849, that the Taylors sold 4 acres with the dwellings to John (trader) and John Jr. (shoemaker) Wadsworth for \$700. They kept the land for 2 years when John Jr. sold about 1¼ acres with dwellings to John and Lydia Wadsworth, keeping the remaining land, the lot abutting the school house lot, for himself.

John and Lydia Wadsworth, married May 22, 1815, then owned the lot in question as well as the one to the west which they then sold, the same day as acquired from John Jr., to George and Rebecca Freeman, married March 5, 1848. The Freemans lived in the house until December 1895, when it passed on to the sisters, Leora and Anna Freeman. Anna died in June 1938, passing her half of the house to her niece, Martha Prouty of Cohasset. Leora died in June 1940 and the remaining half also went to Martha Prouty. Mrs. Prouty had the lot cleared and made suitable to sell, had repairs and a heating system added to the house and then rented it for 2 years. The lot on the west was sold and in May 1942 Martha Prouty sold the house with the present boundaries -- 99 feet along Washington St. by 283 feet by 103 feet by 241 feet.

The house has had 4 owners since then and in 1958 a new kitchen, laundry room and a 3rd bath were added. The grounds were landscaped at this time, creating complete privacy from the street.

The house is in the Greek Revival style and has 8 rooms and 2 fireplaces. There is one outbuilding that was used in the 1940s and 50s as a pigeon house and was then renovated as a guest house and later as a play house. A garage and a carport were built in the style of the playhouse.

Page and Lanci Valentine have lived in the house since 1974 and have added a cellar and shed dormer.

Lanci Valentine
Researcher

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